

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

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(Release 145-3)

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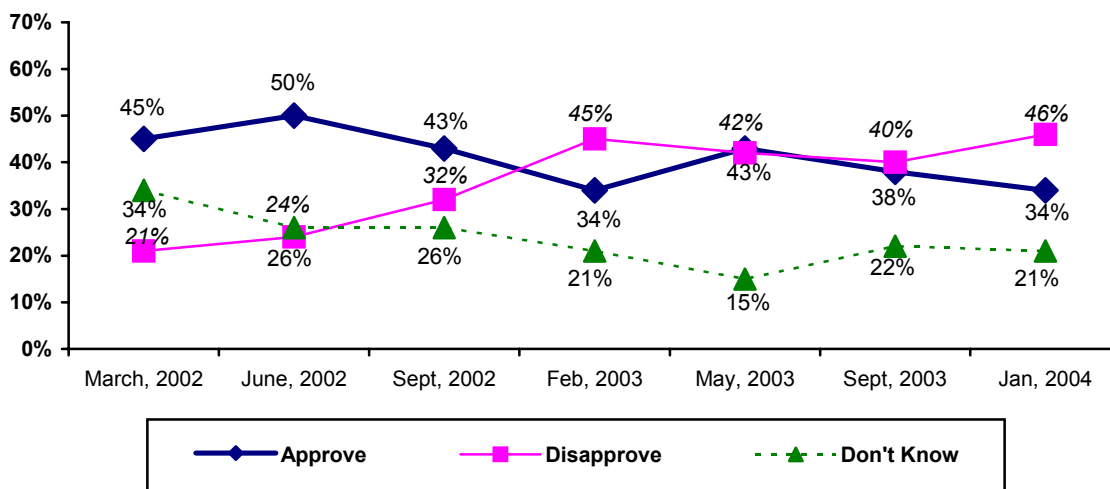
A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo appears in the Thursday, January 22, 2004 Star-Ledger. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll."

PUBLIC OPINION ON GOVERNOR MCGREEVEY TURNS NEGATIVE

Job Performance Rating Drops; Re-Election Number Suggests Vulnerability

The picture facing Governor James E. McGreevey is as bleak as the winter landscape. His job performance rating has declined markedly since September; Democratic support continues to fall; more Garden State residents now hold unfavorable than favorable opinions of him, and only one-third of the state's registered voters say they would vote for a second McGreevey term if the election was held today.

Governor McGreevey Job Rating



The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll • Eagleton Institute of Politics

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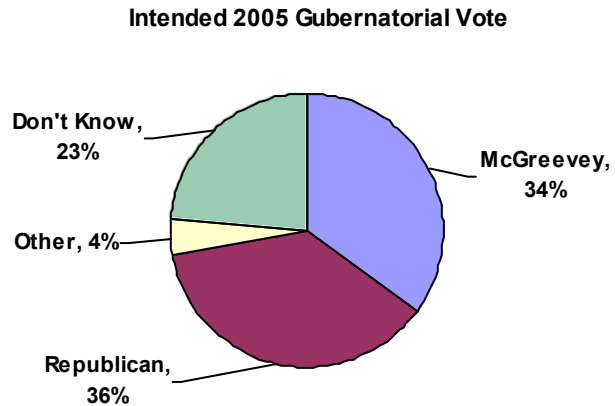
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This is the scene painted by responses to the latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll*, conducted between January 7 and 13 with a scientifically selected sample of 904 New Jersey adults. The poll has a sampling error figure of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points. It includes 823 registered voters, for whom the sampling error figure is a slightly higher 4.2 percent.

The new survey finds more New Jersey residents disapproving of the job McGreevey is doing as governor than approving by a margin of 46 to 34 percent. This is a significant decline from a *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers* survey conducted last September which found roughly equal numbers approving (38%) and disapproving (40%).

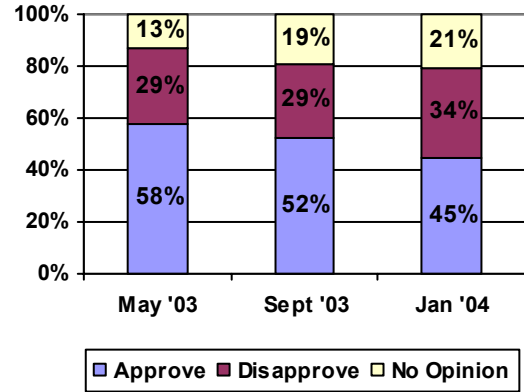
Statewide, just 36 percent say they have a favorable impression of McGreevey, compared to 43 percent with an unfavorable view of him. The remaining 21 percent offer no opinion. Roughly equal numbers believe the state is going in the right (39%) as in the wrong (41%) direction.

While the Governor has almost two years before he stands for re-election, voters' assessments at mid-term are not encouraging. Despite New Jersey being a Democratic state of late—both U.S. Senators and both houses of the state legislature and the governor's office are Democratic—McGreevey runs just evenly versus an unnamed Republican candidate. If the election for governor was held today, just 34 percent say they would vote for McGreevey while 36 percent say they would vote for the Republican candidate. At this time, 70 percent of Democrats give their support to the incumbent governor and a similar 69 percent of Republicans say they would vote for their party's nominee. However, the state's independent electorate currently tilts toward the unnamed Republican candidate over McGreevey by a margin of 38 to just 21 percent at this point.



Perhaps the most dangerous sign for the governor in the new poll is that much of the slippage between September and January has come from those who identify themselves as Democrats, the essential core of McGreevey’s support. Favorable job performance assessments among Democrats have dropped to 45 percent in January, from 52 percent in September and from 58 percent last May. And at this time, disapproval ratings (48%) outnumber approval (30%) among Independents by 18 percentage points. The state’s Republicans are twice as likely to disapprove (56%) than approve (28%) of McGreevey’s job performance.

McGreevey Job Performance Rating among Democrats



In assessing the new set of survey numbers, poll director Cliff Zukin commented, “The good news for McGreevey is that there are still more Democrats than Republicans in New Jersey. But he appears to be extremely weak in his base for an incumbent having been in office for over two years. Compared to when he was first elected, he has less support among Democrats, women, blacks and independents.”

Among other findings of the Rutgers-based opinion poll:

- While McGreevey is more highly regarded by women than men, his overall job performance rating is more negative than positive among this cornerstone of the Democratic party. More women disapprove than approve of the job he is doing as governor by a margin of 42 to 34 percent, with a large number (24%) being undecided about him. Among men, half disapprove of the job he is doing while just one-third approve. Women are evenly divided about whom they would support in the 2005 election, with 35 percent choosing McGreevey, 34 percent the Republican and the remaining third not choosing between the two at this time.

- McGreevey gets only lukewarm assessments on his overall job performance rating from minorities in New Jersey—while 42 percent of blacks and Hispanics approve, one third (32%) disapproves of the job he is doing as governor. While McGreevey runs well among minority voters for re-election (59% McGreevey to 9% for the Republican), a sizable number don't commit to the Democratic incumbent at this time. White voters in New Jersey are far less supportive. Just 28 percent say they would vote to re-elect McGreevey for a second term if the election was held today, and 42 percent say they would vote for the Republican. The remainder largely say they would wait to see who the Republican candidate is or are undecided.
- State geography also plays an important role in the governor's reelection bid. Voters in North Jersey are generally more supportive than those in Central and South Jersey. While McGreevey beats an unnamed Republican in the North by 40 to 33 percent, he loses Central Jersey by 28 to 36 percent, and South Jersey by an even larger margin of 28 to 43 percent.

BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP145-3) January 22, 2004

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* was conducted by telephone from January 7 to 13 with a scientifically selected random sample of 904 New Jersey adults. Some of the figures in this release are based upon a sub-sample of 823 registered voters. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error is ± 3.9 percent, at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adult residents were found to say that things in New Jersey are going in the right direction, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.1 and 53.9 percent (50 ± 3.9) had all New Jersey adult residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for residents of North, Central or South Jersey, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample.* The sampling error for registered voters is ± 4.2 percent.

Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

[Asked of half the sample:]

“Generally speaking, would you say things in New Jersey are going in the right direction or wrong direction?” [Q5]

	<u>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong direction</u>	<u>Depends/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004					
All Adults	39%	41%	19%	99%	(452)
Registered Voters	41%	42%	18%	101%	(413)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>					
--Democrat	50	28	22	100	(138)
--Independent	30	51	19	100	(153)
--Republican	42	43	15	100	(108)
<i>Region</i>					
--North	33	43	23	99	(190)
--Central	56	27	17	100	(117)
--South	35	50	15	100	(136)
<i>Gender</i>					
--Male	44	43	14	101	(213)
--Female	35	40	24	99	(239)
<u>PAST SURVEYS*</u>					
September 2002	45	41	15	101	(804)

* The question wording used in past surveys was “Would you say things in New Jersey are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?”

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way James McGreevey is handling his job as Governor?”
[Q6]

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004					
All Adults	34%	46%	21%	101%	(904)
Registered Voters	37%	49%	15%	101%	(823)
<i><u>Party Affiliation</u></i>					
--Democrat	45	34	21	100	(289)
--Independent	30	48	22	100	(295)
--Republican	28	56	16	100	(214)
<i><u>Region</u></i>					
--North	40	43	18	101	(401)
--Central	28	47	25	100	(227)
--South	28	50	22	100	(254)
<i><u>Race</u></i>					
--White	31	51	18	100	(716)
--Blacks & Hispanics	42	32	26	100	(127)
<i><u>Gender</u></i>					
--Male	34	50	16	100	(429)
--Female	34	42	24	100	(475)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>					
--September 2003	38	40	22	100	(802)
<i><u>Party Affiliation</u></i>					
--Democrat	52	29	19	100	(285)
--Independent	26	41	33	100	(212)
--Republican	26	59	15	100	(195)
<i><u>Region</u></i>					
--North	39	37	24	100	(367)
--Central	38	42	20	100	(205)
--South	39	40	21	100	(214)
<i><u>Gender</u></i>					
--Male	41	41	18	100	(386)
--Female	36	39	25	100	(416)
--May 2003	43	42	15	100	(1002)
<i><u>Party Affiliation</u></i>					
--Democrat	58	29	13	100	(313)
--Independent	40	45	16	101	(322)
--Republican	29	57	15	101	(242)
--February 2003	34	45	21	100	(802)
--September 2002	43	32	26	101	(804)
--June 2002	50	24	26	100	(801)
--March 2002	45	21	34	100	(803)

“If the 2005 election for governor was held today, would you vote for James McGreevey or the Republican candidate?” [NJ1]

	<u>McGreevey</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>Wouldn't Vote</u>	<u>DK/ Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004 Registered Voters	34%	36%	4%	12%	2%	11%	99%	(823)
<i>Party Affiliation</i>								
--Democrat	70	10	4	7	3	5	99	(261)
--Independent	21	38	5	18	3	15	100	(271)
--Republican	9	69	4	12	--	7	101	(202)
<i>Gender</i>								
--Male	33	39	5	13	2	9	101	(390)
--Female	35	34	3	12	3	13	100	(433)
<i>Region</i>								
--North	40	33	3	11	2	11	100	(366)
--Central	28	36	3	14	2	16	99	(210)
--South	28	43	7	12	3	7	100	(228)
<i>Age</i>								
--18 to 29	46	34	3	5	1	12	101	(87)
--30 to 49	32	39	5	11	4	10	101	(293)
--50 and older	33	35	3	16	1	11	99	(419)
<i>Race</i>								
--White	28	42	4	14	2	10	100	(669)
--Blacks & Hispanics	59	9	1	6	6	18	99	(109)

“I’m going to read you the names of some political figures in New Jersey and would like you to tell me if your opinion of each is favorable or unfavorable. If you don’t have an opinion, just say so. How about New Jersey Governor James McGreevey – favorable or unfavorable?” [NF3]

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
January 2004					
All Adults	36%	43%	21%	100%	(904)
Registered Voters	38%	47%	15%	100%	(823)
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--Democrat	52	26	22	100	(289)
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REGION:

The northern part of the state consists of the following counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Union and Warren.

The central region of New Jersey consists of Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset counties.

The southern part of the state consists of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean and Salem counties.